This mintage, the earliest to depict a historical rather than a mythical event, is the only surviving contemporary portrait of Alexander and indication of his own psyche—a snapshot taken at the acme of his career, shortly before his humiliation at the Hyphasis and his decline into paranoia, self-doubt, and fatal illness. It also touches on his perceived 'divinity'. Orators around 324 alluded to Alexander's wanting to be a god, and the medallion is the only concrete, contemporary evidence attesting Alexander's 'edging towards divinity' (p. 163), not as *theos*, but *isotheos*. The 'equal' of a god, though, is not necessarily a god, as Callisthenes made clear. H. does not make this distinction, nor does he always apply his relentless logic to the literary sources, since he unquestioningly accepts the tradition of Alexander's lifelong belief in his divine paternity and self-styled divinity (pp. 156, 163). H.'s fundamentalist approach to the literary sources still leaves a gap between the numismatist and the historian.

The novelistic format and the archly allusive chapter titles (e.g. 'Man of Mystery', 'A Dark and Stormy Night') belie the rigour of this exercise in source criticism. The anecdotal, somewhat prolix digressions on Alexander the Great T-shirts, Schliemann, and Darwin may irritate purists, but the general reader will be as intrigued by the 'plot' as the student will be enlightened by this lucid introduction to numismatics, to the tools and methodology of *Altertumswissenschaft*, and to the dawn of scientific and archeological enquiry in the late Victorian age. As in his 1989 and 1999 monographs, H. melds style, imagination, and scholarship, reading coins like texts and making them speak to us. The plates, maps, and line-drawings are well executed and the index is comprehensive. Three annotated appendixes give the necessary technical information. This is provocative scholarship as well as a 'ripping yarn'.

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THE ALEXANDER LEGEND

C. Mossé: *Alexander: Destiny and Myth.* Translated by J. Lloyd. Pp. xii + 244, maps. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004 (first published as *Alexandre: la destinée d'un mythe*, 2001). Paper, £16.99 (Cased, £49.99). ISBN: 0-7486-1765-5 (0-7486-1764-7 hbk).

This is a puzzling book. At a time when many books on Alexander are being published, it is reasonable to expect a new one to have some distinctive contribution to make, either in interpretation or assessment of the evidence. One looked forward to a treatment of the subject by a distinguished senior historian of the fourth century; but most readers will find this one difficult to use.

So, what is the main aim or *argumentum* of the book? M. begins by making the sound point (p. 6) that to understand the 'real man' one needs to understand the myth he engendered as well. The conclusion of the book (p. 213) is that, contrary to prevailing historical opinion (apparently), individuals do change history, other notable examples being Louis XIV, Napoleon, and Charles De Gaulle.

This not very revolutionary opinion is presented through a summary of Alexander's life (thirty-two pages); a discussion of some important questions about his kingship (relations with the Greeks; Persian ways; divine sonship); a discussion of Alexander's personality (his virtues are neatly listed in Chapter 10, while Chapter 11 gives a much shorter list of his vices, in a rather Plutarchan style); a useful run through of the main

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events after Alexander; and a survey of some aspects of the later legend (she calls it myth) of Alexander.

The narrative of Alexander's life is the least satisfactory part of the book. It is so brief as to be misleading. One sees that the senior historian has made up her mind about the main issues and is not interested in discussing them: p. 22, 'we shall steer clear of the debates and disagreements' (about the relative value of the sources). P. 26 'There is no need to dwell on the question [of whether the visit to Siwa was before or after the foundation of Alexandria]. The version provided by Plutarch and Arrian seems the most likely one.' This enlightened historian knows (where the rest of us have to wrestle with arguments) that the Greek cities of Asia were 'almost certainly not' in the League of Corinth (p. 57); she knows the dates of Cleitarchus and of Curtius Rufus; she knows why Alexander burnt Persepolis (p. 30: it was the influence of the feminist Thais); she tells us that Peucestas alone saved Alexander's life at the Malli town (p. 40). She does not even mention the controversies about the tombs at Vergina (p. 15). I used to try to persuade undergraduates that the essence of writing about the past was to consider the problems and arguments: this book sets an opposite example. The historian perhaps assumes that her readers already know the detail of the arguments and will be interested only in her own position on these matters. Unfortunately her position does not represent any advance on older ground, while the narrative section would not even qualify as an encyclopedia article.

The historian's vision becomes more remarkable as the *essai* (for that is what it is) proceeds. The explicitly Plutarchan (p. 87) treatment of character by virtues and vices advances to what looks very like an acceptance of the view that 'His aim was to subject the whole earth to the same law of reason, a single *politeia*, turning all men into one single *demos*' (p. 101).

If seasoned Alexander watchers feel that they have been here before, with W. W. Tarn more than half a century ago, that impression is reinforced as the analytical chapters proceed. Scarcely any scholar more recent than Tarn and Droysen is mentioned—unless they are French: Goukowsky is (rightly) credited with important work and given the honour of a summary, while Will and Orrieux are also praised. Badian makes a couple of fleeting appearances. The historian has not only made up her mind on the issues, she made it up fifty years ago.

The most original part of the book is that on the growth of the legend of Alexander. A whole chapter is devoted to the image of Alexander in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century France, on the grounds that 'the myth of Alexander seems to have been particularly fully elaborated here' (p. 178). The Persians and Arabs, the Irish, the Jews (with six Alexander Romances), and the modern Greeks would be particularly interested in her grounds for this assertion. The final section, on modern novels, discusses the two contrasting cases of Klaus Mann and Valerio Massimo Manfredi, both of which are conveniently available in French translation (pp. 202, 205), a fact which enables her to ignore Mary Renault, Arno Schmidt, and Tom Holt to name but three.

No writer can hope to survey the whole of the enormous legendary *Nachleben* of Alexander, certainly not in less than forty pages. These brief sketches, however, rest on shaky foundations. Rightly stating that the legend begins with the Greek *Alexander Romance*, she misleadingly continues (p. 176) that this is 'attributed to Callisthenes, but was subsequently often reworked'. She does not make clear to readers that there are a number of different recensions of *AR*, and writes (p. 176) as if the account of Alexander's visit to Jerusalem were from the Hellenistic original; on p. 180, however, she plumps for a third-century A.D. date for *AR* and then goes on to recount the legend

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of the diving bell which first appears in the eighth century. Perhaps this muddle can be related to the fact that the only English version of *AR* mentioned in her bibliography (or the additional bibliography provided for the English edition) is a translation of the Armenian version; a French translation (of the Greek recension L alone) is also given.

The book is an almost infinite resource of unsupported, *ex cathedra* statements which any student should be warned to steer clear of. It has no new interpretations (though several old ones) to offer the scholar, and is a startling recommendation, by negative example, of the benefits of international cooperation and debate in classical scholarship.

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EASTERN CONTACTS

M. SCHUOL, U. HARTMAN, A. LUTHER (edd.): *Grenzüberschreitungen. Formen des Kontakts zwischen Orient und Okzident im Altertum*. (Oriens et Occidens 3.) Pp. 414, pls. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2002. Cased, €76. ISBN: 3-515-07962-9.

The present publication is a collection of thirteen papers presented at a colloquium held at the FU Berlin in March 2001. The theme of the colloquium is aptly entitled *Grenzüberschreitungen*, 'frontier crossings', as the contributions aim to investigate the prerequisites, forms, and consequences of contacts between West and East in antiquity (p. 7). They exemplify or highlight individual cases of intercultural contacts, covering an extensive period of Near Eastern and classical antiquity, from the second millennium B.C. to late antiquity, and offering a well-balanced range of topics, including literary, historical, archaeological, anthropological, philological, and numismatic evidence, reflecting the varied levels on which cultural influence between West and East took place. The collection of papers, each provided with an extensive bibliography, is complemented by a brief introduction by the editors, and by a series editor, as well as the opening lecture to the colloquium given by Alexander Demandt on Alexander and Islam.

The chronological framework is marked by two contributions on nomads and settled peoples. U. Scharrer's contribution discusses the case of Tadmor in the second millennium B.C., while S. Stark considers the nomadic and settled groups of Middle and Central Asia in the sixth to eighth centuries A.D. Scharrer highlights the case of Tadmor's early phase of settlement, in which scarce evidence has led to two polarized views, which either regard Tadmor as a centre of trade as early as the second millennium B.C. or as a nomadic centre which did not become a city until the Hellenistic period (p. 280). Scharrer argues that, despite its scarcity, written evidence allows the conclusion that Tadmor was already settled by the second millennium B.C., while being surrounded by a nomadic population, a phenomenon which Scharrer describes as an 'eingeschlossene Sesshaftigkeit'. In support of his argument he refers to later documents which testify that Tadmor held an important strategic position on the trade route between Mari and Qatna. S. Stark concentrates on another neglected area of research, i.e. on aspects of the pre-Islamic history of Middle and Central Asia and its characteristic diverse population consisting of settled and nomadic groups. He highlights the very complex relationship between those groups who pursued *Weidewirtschaft* (pastoral agriculture), those who lived in areas which allowed them to

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